THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH) : (a) and (b) UGC has taken a decision, in principle, to set up its regional offices in different parts of the country. No decision on the location or the time frame for opening of these offices has been taken.

Removing Hindi from the curriculum of Navodaya Vidyalayas

637. SHRI M. VINCENT: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to remove Hindi from the curriculum of Navodaya School to be set up in non-Hindi speaking States like Tamil Nadu; and

(b) if not, whether Government propose to provide funds for setting up Navodaya Schools to the States which do not have these schools ?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) There is no such provision in the scheme to provide funds to the States.

Higher education and universal primary education

638. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are spending a disproportionate amount on higher education at the expense of fulfilling the objective of universal primary education ;

(b) if so, the details of the expenditure on higher education and primary education at present; and

(c) the action Government propose to take to achieve the goal of universal primary education in the country ?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH) : (a) and (b) Central and State Government expenditure on Higher Education including Technical Education was Rs. 10043 crores during the Seventh Plan (1985-90). The corresponding expenditure for Elementary Education was Rs. 23582 crores. In terms of percentage, Higher Education including Technical Education works out to 19.2% and Elementary Education 45.1% of the total budgeted expenditure on Education.

(c) Some of the main steps taken to universalise elementary education are :

(i) The provision of education upto elementary stage free of tuition fee in the Government schools in the country;

(ii) The provision of primary schools within 1 km. walking distance of all habitations with a population of 300. In the case of SC/ST habitations, the norm is relaxed to include habitations with population of 200;

(iii) Provision of incentives such as free uniform, free textbooks, attendance scholarship for girls, mid-day meals to SC/ST children and girls;

(iv) Improvement of physical facilities in primary schools under the centrally sponsored scheme of Operation Blackboard;

(v) Establishment of District Institutes of Education and Training for improving teacher effectiveness; and

(vi) Provison of part-time non-formal education to school drop-outs, girls and working children.

Sites of Mahabharat discovered in Morena, Madhya Pradesh

639. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some ancient sites of Mahabharat era have been found in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so,, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to undertake excavation at other places also in the State ;

(d) if so, what are the details in this regard ; and

(e) what action Government have taken to preserve these sites of archaeological importance?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI, ARJUN SINGH) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, exploration of the ancient sites of villages Kutwar, Sihoniya, Tutwas ?